



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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news digest

increasing in Toronto in March to describe his global process of intercession. His report to his colleagues from the interviews he is conducting across the diocese, expected in mid-May, will include his observations and suggestions for direction. The year-old diocesan *Central* will include his observations and suggestions for direction. The year-old diocesan *Central*

97-1722D

Anglican Primates meet in Jerusalem to share common concerns and plan Lambeth meeting

(ENS) The top leaders of the Anglican Communion gathered March 9 in the Holy City of Jerusalem, the city "where dreams collide," to share common concerns and to plan for next year's Lambeth Conference in England, expected to draw 800 Anglican bishops from around the world.

As they stepped onto land sacred to three world religions they were also stepping into a tense political situation--and some of the most dangerous turf in the world.

The meeting came at a time when Israeli bulldozers were defiantly poised to begin a highly controversial housing settlement in traditionally Arab East Jerusalem, ignoring withering international criticism. Mid-way through the meeting the primates were "shocked and horrified by the news that reached them of the shooting by a Jordanian soldier of innocent Israeli school girls on a trip to an observation post on the Jordan River."

During their week-long meeting, the bishops and archbishops not only shared their own stories of struggle and hope, but immersed themselves in their setting by walking the traditional Stations of the Cross in the nearby Old City. They also spent a day in the Gaza Strip meeting with Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestine National Authority and visiting a refugee camp, as well as dedicating a chapel at Ahli Arab Hospital, run by the Diocese of Jerusalem.

The crippling third world debt, and related issues of poverty and economic justice, quickly emerged as the key issue for next summer's Lambeth Conference. Bishop Mark Dyer of the Episcopal Church in the USA, who participated in the meeting as co-chair of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, said that the issue is "not just debt but dehumanization," a contradiction of the belief that all people are children of God. He said that it would be "unfaithful" to watch the systematic destruction of brothers and sisters without making a strong statement at Lambeth.

"Like the campaign against slavery, this is a campaign that every Christian should support," added Richard Holloway, primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Presiding Bishop Maurice Sinclair of Argentina, primate of the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone, introduced the concerns emerging from the Second Anglican Encounter in the South, held last February in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

In a statement on human sexuality issued as part of its final report, participants expressed concern that "the setting aside of biblical teaching in such actions as the ordination

of practicing homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions calls into question the authority of the Holy Scriptures. This is totally unacceptable to us." It also calls into question the "mutual accountability and interdependence" that should be a hallmark of the Anglican Communion, instead of placing "serious strain on the internal unity of the Communion."

97-1723D

House of Bishops retreat marked with anxiety in time of transition

(ENS) An air of anxiety hovered over the House of Bishops retreat in early March at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina, as bishops shared apprehensions about what the future holds and wrestled with questions about their own identity as a community.

The sadness of parting also marked the meeting, as the bishops started to say their goodbyes to Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, whose term comes to an end this year.

Yet not all was somber. Members of the house performed a series of skits on the final evening in an uproarious celebration of Browning's leadership. "We laughed. Oh, we laughed," recalled one bishop.

And at a press briefing following the four-day meeting, several bishops said that a willingness to talk about issues and a new expectation of civility helped ameliorate the concern many felt about "life after General Convention" in Philadelphia this summer.

The bishops voiced particular concerns about how they were to make an informed choice in selecting the next presiding bishop, the magnitude of the questions that would face them at General Convention, and the fact that, despite strong attendance of 139 bishops, 15 diocesan bishops were noticeably absent at this last meeting before convention. Among those absent were three of the four bishops who refuse to recognize women priests, and several others who sympathize with their position or have other concerns about what they see as liberal trends in the church.

97-1724D

New Jersey diocese turns to consultant to help ease tensions

(ENS) Bedeviled by a financial crisis, claims of institutional racism, and complaints that their bishop has an autocratic style, Episcopalians in the Diocese of New Jersey are seeking to reconcile factions and heal divisions that threaten to fracture the diocese.

In January, a letter to all parishes from several diocesan leaders, including the Bishop Joe Morris Doss, the chair of the standing committee, the treasurer and wardens of diocesan council, said that the Rev. Peter Steinke, a consultant skilled in conflict resolution, had been hired to help the diocese resolve its problems.

The diocesan standing committee called for the consultant last November as a move to "deal with the issues of conflict, dysfunction, tension, trust, anger, and lack of communication which are present in the diocese."

Steinke, a Lutheran pastor living in Connecticut, addressed the Diocesan Convention meeting in Trenton in March to describe his planned process of intervention. His report on his findings from the interviews he is conducting across the diocese, expected in mid-May, will include his observations and suggestions for direction. The year-old diocesan wellness committee will develop a proposed plan of action during the summer.

Also at the convention, Doss, in an starkly candid address, pledged to work with clergy and lay leaders in a collegial style to overcome the problems of the past.

"I love my ministry. I want to be a good bishop. I want to be *your* bishop," Doss told the convention. He admitted that he had made mistakes and predicted he would err again. When he asked, "Will you help me?", more than three-quarters of the 800 clergy and lay delegates stood to give him prolonged applause.

97-1725D

Audit of Episcopal Church trust funds under way as group files complaint

(ENS) An attorney representing a small group calling itself the Trust Group has filed a complaint with the New York state attorney general claiming possible mishandling of trust funds held by the Episcopal Church.

James H. Crosby of Mobile, Alabama, a member of the standing committee of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, stated in a March 11 press release that his clients--three retired bishops, one priest and five lay people--were not satisfied that Treasurer Stephen Duggan was providing sufficient information about the management of the nearly 1,000 trust funds totaling about \$200 million. Crosby said that his clients were particularly concerned about the funds' management during the tenure of the previous treasurer, Ellen Cooke, who is now serving a five-year prison sentence for the embezzlement of \$2.2 million from the church.

Crosby had demanded that the Trust Group be permitted to conduct its own review of the fund's accounts, and when that demand was refused, said, "we have no choice now but to seek the support of Attorney General (Dennis) Vacco."

In letters to Crosby, however, both Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and Duggan explained that the Executive Council had already authorized an independent audit of the trust funds, which is under way, and that the audit's results will be made public. "I am therefore not willing to permit further private investigations to be conducted in the midst of what I have concluded to be a proper, official investigation of the same matter," Browning wrote.

As of the first week of April, there was no indication whether the attorney general's office would consider the Trust Group's complaint.

97-1726D

Long Island investigation report delayed, effort hampered by unofficial inquiry

(ENS) In a report to the Diocese of Long Island, March 3, the diocesan standing committee explained that an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct by Long Island clergy will take longer than originally expected.

"As many of you know," the committee stated, "we had hoped to be able to present a report to the people of the diocese and to the wider church much sooner than it now appears possible or advisable."

The standing committee was charged with overseeing an investigation into claims made in *Penthouse* magazine that a Long Island priest lured young Brazilian men to the diocese for homosexual orgies with clergy. While numerous interviews have been conducted to determine what happened, the report notes that "each line of questioning tends to open the need to make further inquiries to insure we are 'getting to the bottom' of the matter." A firm specializing in forensic auditing also is looking into any possibilities of financial culpability by those involved.

"We believe we are making significant advances in the inquiry," the report notes, adding that Bishop O'Kelley Whitaker, retired bishop of Central New York, who is heading the investigation, "has told us that a clear sense of what actually took place is emerging."

The official investigation has been hampered, however, the report warned, by a "parallel investigation" being "partially funded by persons outside the diocese." The unofficial inquiry "opposes the stand taken by the delegates at convention that the people of the Diocese of Long Island themselves, through the official bodies of the diocese, can deal with the issues raised." The report did not specify who was conducting the parallel inquiry.

97-1722

Anglican Primates meet in Jerusalem to share common concerns and plan Lambeth meeting

by James Solheim

(ENS) The top leaders of the Anglican Communion gathered March 9 in the Holy City of Jerusalem, the city "where dreams collide," to share common concerns and to plan for next year's Lambeth Conference in England, expected to draw 800 Anglican bishops from around the world.

As they stepped onto land sacred to three world religions they were also stepping into a tense political situation--and some of the most dangerous turf in the world.

The meeting came at a time when Israeli bulldozers were defiantly poised to begin a highly controversial housing settlement in traditionally Arab East Jerusalem, ignoring withering international criticism. Midway through the meeting the primates expressed that they were "shocked and horrified by the news that reached them of the shooting by a Jordanian soldier of innocent Israeli school girls on a trip to an observation post on the Jordan River."

Speaking to a packed congregation of church leaders and representatives of the diplomatic community at Evensong March 11 at St. George's Cathedral, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said that he and other "sympathetic outsiders" were keenly aware of the "justified longings of the two peoples of this land." He pointed to the sufferings of the Jewish peoples during their "long and terrible journey," and to the Palestinians "whose journey has also been one of suffering." Carey emphasized that "there can be no justice for one part of the human family without justice for another."

"In this small and historic stretch of land, a powerful clash of dreams is taking place," he said. "They are not simply dreams of having a legitimate home; they go much deeper than that, reaching into the further recesses of the soul."

A suffering Communion

During their week-long meeting, the bishops and archbishops not only shared their own stories of struggle and hope, but immersed themselves in their setting by walking the traditional Stations of the Cross in the nearby Old City. They also spent a day in the Gaza Strip meeting with Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian National Authority and visiting a refugee camp, as well as dedicating a chapel at Ahli Arab Hospital, run by the Diocese of Jerusalem.

"Even though the Holy Land was ever before us during this past week, we also heard stories from around our Communion of churches--a suffering Communion," they said in a final statement March 16. During the meeting the primates shared some painful stories: a crisis of episcopal leadership in Rwanda in the wake of civil war; war in the Sudan that has

forced 10 bishops into exile; the struggle for justice among the dalits or untouchables in Pakistan; oppression and persecution of the church in Myanmar (Burma); isolation in Bangladesh; sectarian violence in Ireland.

"Sharing these stories was the high point of the meeting for me because it brought us all together," said Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning. "It creates a whole new bond of affection every time we meet."

Third world debt emerges as key issue for Lambeth

The crippling third world debt, and related issues of poverty and economic justice, quickly emerged as the key issue for next summer's Lambeth Conference. Bishop Mark Dyer of the Episcopal Church in the USA, who participated in the meeting as co-chair of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, said that the issue is "not just debt but dehumanization," a contradiction of the belief that all people are children of God. He said that it would be "unfaithful" to watch the systematic destruction of brothers and sisters without making a strong statement at Lambeth.

"Like the campaign against slavery, this is a campaign that every Christian should support," added Richard Holloway, primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Poverty is a "decisive issue for the church, a curse that provides one of the greatest threats to society," argued Archbishop Winston Ndugane, primate of the Church of Southern Africa who will chair the section dealing with the issue at Lambeth. He said that it is not a debate about money but about "rights and relationships, it's about powerlessness."

"This is the time to deal with this issue because just about everybody is focused on the debt," added Bishop James Ottley of the US, Anglican Observer at the United Nations. "Now is the time to develop a strategy."

Sexuality issues expose differences

If there was quick and unanimous agreement about economic justice issues, the discussion of sexuality issues exposed deep differences.

Presiding Bishop Maurice Sinclair of Argentina, primate of the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone, introduced the concerns emerging from the Second Anglican Encounter in the South, held last February in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on the theme of Scripture in the life and mission of the church in the 21st century.

In a statement on human sexuality issued as part of its final report, participants expressed concern that "the setting aside of biblical teaching in such actions as the ordination of practicing homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions calls into question the authority of the Holy Scriptures. This is totally unacceptable to us." It also calls into question the "mutual accountability and interdependence" that should be a hallmark of the Anglican Communion, instead of placing "serious strain on the internal unity of the Communion."

In a statement reflecting the concerns of his own province, Sinclair was even more blunt. The decision in the heresy trial of Bishop Walter Righter of the United States for

ordaining a gay man to the diaconate represents an "apparent lack of awareness of implications for the Communion as a whole in the failure of the majority to identify and affirm church discipline in this area of sexual ethics." He called for a "doctrinal guide" as a way of holding the Communion together and building collegiality and to "affirm all that is essential and relevant in the doctrinal standards we already possess."

Why should "we perpetuate a provincial congregationalism?" he asked. "Surely it is a wholesome thing for provinces to be accountable to each other and free neither to innovate foolishly nor to stagnate lazily without the possibility of intervention from the wider Communion," he contended. "Some light-handed but wise-headed supervision of a collegial nature would do us all good. Authority in the Anglican Communion would continue to be a distributed authority but it would gain the necessary coherence."

Browning said that he was encouraged by the emphasis on economic issues and not surprised that "we are a long ways from agreeing on sexuality issues."

Several primates suggested that it may be necessary to consider a commission to deal with sexuality issues, similar to the Eames Commission that dealt with women in the episcopate. Carey said that he would consider the suggestion.

Primates clarify role of UN observer

Responding to a report from its standing committee, the primates "readily affirmed the work" of the Anglican Observer's office but discussed some problems in communication. They endorsed the recommendation that the office stay within a budget of \$300,000 a year. "We recognize that we are still feeling our way so it is not easy to determine what it will take to make the office feasible," said Archbishop Robin Eames of Ireland, on behalf of the committee.

The Anglican Communion Office in London will review the staffing of the office in an effort to achieve "adequate responsibility, accountability and communication," Eames said. That will include "closer involvement" of the chair of the Anglican Consultative Council and the secretary general and an effort to alter the perception of "isolation" between the office and members of the Communion. The standing committee also called for wider representation on the office's advisory committee, "making it culturally and geographically more representative."

Eames said that the committee had dealt honestly with the broader questions of the value of the office to the Communion, realizing that they were still "feeling their way to see what the full potential for the office is in the life of the Communion."

Identity issues still loom large

Speaking for the design committee of the Lambeth Conference, Archbishop Keith Rayner of Australia said that it was clear from early responses that bishops were looking for a "deepening of communion, with God and with one another," some practical help in becoming better bishops, and an opportunity to address "some of the great questions of the

church--to say something to the church and the world."

"We will be pressed by the media about the meaning of Lambeth... It's an occasion when the church can speak with some relevance to the world," Rayner asserted. Trying to manage the individual concerns of 800 bishops and still say something "concrete and coherent" will be a definite challenge, he admitted, yet he hoped that it would be possible to limit the number of issues, "otherwise we are condemned to shallowness."

Eames and Dyer introduced the report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, called the Virginia Report for short because it stems from a meeting at Virginia Seminary. As a "further step along the road of self-discovery," it is an attempt to "discover more about what it means to be an Anglican, and how we perceive the machinery, the Instruments of Unity, should inter-relate," Eames said.

The report is an intense theological examination of what it means to be a communion, an exploration of the unity and diversity. "I believe that the next Lambeth Conference will be the most defining Lambeth in history," Eames said. "It will determine what we are and where are going. It will stand or fall on our sense of unity and vision." The Virginia Report is intended to help in that theological self-definition.

"The critical concern is: How do we remain as one in God and as members of the one Body of Christ, at a time when independence is more valued than interdependence, when the independent decision of individual dioceses and provinces threaten the unity for which Jesus Christ prayed the night before he died," asked Dyer. He said that issues such as lay presidency at the Eucharist, the sacramental blessing of same sex unions, and the ordination of sexually active homosexuals "will test the truth of our unity."

Yet Dyer and others are convinced that the Virginia Report, heir to a process that held the Anglican Communion together when it became apparent that women would be elected to the episcopate, provides a model and theological underpinning for a Communion "held together in the creative tension of provincial autonomy and interdependence."

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

97-1723

House of Bishops retreat marked with anxiety in time of transition

by Jerry Hames and James H. Thrall

(ENS) An air of anxiety hovered over the House of Bishops retreat in early March at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina, as bishops shared apprehensions about what the future holds and wrestled with questions about their own identity as a community.

The sadness of parting also marked the meeting, as the bishops started to say their goodbyes to Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, whose term comes to an end this year.

Yet not all was somber. Members of the house performed a series of skits on the final evening in an uproarious celebration of Browning's leadership. "We laughed. Oh, we laughed," recalled one bishop. In a surprise to Browning, his wife, Patti, showed up for evening's festivities.

And at a press briefing following the four-day meeting, several bishops said that a willingness to talk about issues and a new expectation of civility helped ameliorate the concern many felt about "life after General Convention" in Philadelphia this summer.

An urge to engage the issues

Bishop Sam Hulsey of Northwest Texas, chair of the agenda planning committee, said that his committee threw out part of the planned schedule in response to requests that the bishops have an opportunity to talk about convention issues.

"I think that [the willingness to engage in discussion of issues] is very good news about how we're going to do our business in Philadelphia," he said.

The bishops voiced particular concerns about how they were to make an informed choice in selecting the next presiding bishop, the magnitude of the questions that would face them at General Convention, and the fact that, despite strong attendance of 139 bishops, 15 diocesan bishops were noticeably absent at this last meeting before convention. Among those absent were three of the four bishops who refuse to recognize women priests, and several others who sympathize with their position or have other concerns about what they see as liberal trends in the church.

"The question is 'Who's going to pick up the initiative to bring these various groups together'" said Bishop Charles Duvall of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast. "Is there any mechanism to make that happen between now and General Convention?"

The bishops also were eager to begin to discuss such issues as the Concordat of Agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), world mission, funding for the church's national ministries, and a recommendation that would make mandatory the right of women to exercise their ministry in every diocese. Having met

together with the ELCA Conference of Bishops last fall, the bishops paused to participate in a telephone hookup with the conference's March meeting. They also continued with a six-year study of the sin of racism and heard a report from the Church Pension Group.

Selecting a new presiding bishop

Bishop David Bowman of the Diocese of Western New York, said that much time was spent discussing the office of the presiding bishop and the leadership qualities needed. He said newer bishops want a means by which they can learn about those who will be nominated for presiding bishop in mid-April.

In one "mind of the house" statement, the bishops agreed not to vote for any last-minute candidate for presiding bishop who had not undergone the same physical and psychological testing and background checks that others had.

Browning described what it has been like to be presiding bishop as part of the house's reflection on the qualities they wanted to see in the new presiding bishop. In his sermon at the closing Eucharist, Browning noted that "the ones who will allow themselves to be considered for my job would have to have been without vital signs for a good many years not to know the difficulties that swarm around it. It is not for the faint of heart, that is for sure."

His bottom-line assessment, however, was that the position was "hard, but good," he said.

"It's not fun being caricatured and criticized. . . . It's not fun making the kind of financial decisions we've had to make. Scandal is not fun," Browning said. "But to travel around this church of ours and see how ordinary people love their churches, how good they are, how hard they work, how involved they are in the lives of the poor in their communities--it is a great joy."

One of his greatest satisfactions, he said, has been the experience of the House of Bishops. "I wouldn't trade for anything the life we have had together, you and I," he said.

Statement addresses style of doing business

The bishops also approved a statement about the manner in which they will do business at convention in an attempt by both the House of Bishops and House of Deputies to avoid the kind of rancorous debate that divided the bishops at the 1991 General Convention in Phoenix. The public discord led to a series of closed sessions and caused the presiding bishop to call for the annual spring "retreat" meetings of the House of Bishops in an effort to restore collegiality.

Yet, of the 139 bishops at the meeting, 60 have been elected within the past six years, including some who have never attended a General Convention. These newer bishops made it clear, Hulsey said, that for them the Phoenix troubles were ancient history.

As the bishops noted in a communique to the church issued at the meeting's conclusion, "How far we have come over these last six years. We have learned to listen with care to each other in our table discussion groups. We have listened to our wise elders and

our most junior members."

Having known only the more collegial atmosphere of the House of Bishops in recent years, the newer bishops pointed out that "their frame of reference was very different," Hulsey said. "We used the phrase 'sea change' and 'turning the page.'"

In their communique, the bishops quoted Browning's comments: "We are keenly aware that we are at a time of great change. . . . Because this is an unsettling time, an experience of the desert, the place in between, we are called to be mindful . . . to choose who we are, and how we will be with intention."

--Jerry Hames is editor of Episcopal Life, the national newspaper of the Episcopal Church. James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information.

97-1724

New Jersey diocese turns to consultant to help ease tensions

by Jerry Hames

(ENS) Bedeviled by a financial crisis, claims of institutional racism, and complaints that their bishop has an autocratic style, Episcopalians in the Diocese of New Jersey are seeking to reconcile factions and heal divisions that threaten to fracture the diocese.

In January, a letter to all parishes from several diocesan leaders, including Bishop Joe Morris Doss, the chair of the standing committee, the treasurer and wardens of diocesan council, said that the Rev. Peter Steinke, a consultant skilled in conflict resolution, had been hired to help the diocese resolve its problems.

The diocesan standing committee called for the consultant last November as a move to "deal with the issues of conflict, dysfunction, tension, trust, anger, and lack of communication which are present in the diocese."

Steinke, a Lutheran pastor living in Connecticut, addressed the Diocesan Convention meeting in Trenton in March to describe his planned process of intervention. To date, he said, he has spoken with Doss, his staff, standing committee members, and members of the black caucus and Hispanic caucus.

Steinke's report on his findings from the interviews he is conducting across the diocese, expected in mid-May, will include his observations and suggestions for direction. The year-old diocesan wellness committee will develop a proposed plan of action during the summer.

The implementation of the action plan is scheduled for fall. "That's when the rubber will hit the road," said one priest, closely associated with the study.

Bishops admits to faults

Also at the convention, Doss, in an starkly candid address, pledged to work with clergy and lay leaders in a collegial style to overcome the problems of the past.

"I love my ministry. I want to be a good bishop. I want to be *your* bishop," Doss told the convention. He admitted that he had made mistakes and predicted he would err again.

"In my zeal to combat racism, I have sometimes failed to consult the very people most affected by it," he said. "In my enthusiasm for collegiality, I have at time forgotten to seek advice from you. I recognize other faults as well. But I learn from them, change what I can and be a better bishop because of them."

When he asked, "Will you help me?", more than three-quarters of the 800 clergy and lay delegates stood to give him prolonged applause.

Doss started his two-year tenure as bishop in the financially strapped diocese by asking for the resignations of most of the diocesan staff, leaving a truncated diocesan structure that has been criticized as unresponsive to letters and telephone calls. His handling of a crisis in the diocesan cathedral where the dean was accused of forcing male staff members to have sex with him also has been criticized.

But where some critics see an overly controlling management style, others see a visionary leader with a strong hand attempting to move the diocese out of its doldrums. Doss's liberal stances on social issues--opposed by some conservative elements in the diocese--have exacerbated his problems, they suggest.

"From day one, he's been under unremitting attack from certain quarters of the diocese," the Rev. E. Walton Zelley Jr., head of the diocesan council, told the *Sunday Star-Ledger* newspaper. "I'm not saying the bishop hasn't made mistakes," Zelley said. "He's shot himself in the foot in a few instances. but that's true of every bishop I've served under. I've never seen anybody get it in the chops like this bishop has."

Financial woes compounded

As the diocese continues to face financial woes, the New Jersey convention approved a scaled-back 1997 budget which cuts its funding obligations to the national church from \$585,000 to \$158,760. In 1996, the diocese gave only \$216,825 of the \$576,000 it had committed to national giving.

Stephen Duggan, national treasurer for the Episcopal Church, predicted that this reduction will have serious consequences for national and overseas work as it contributes to an expected \$1.8 million national shortfall for 1997.

The diocese's financial problems stem in part from the decision of six predominantly black and Hispanic parishes to place in escrow the funds that they normally would send to the diocese.

The Rev. Henry Atkins, the bishop's liaison to an anti-racism commission created last year, said that he was told the funds would continue to be withheld until the diocese took significant steps to eradicate institutional racism. One complaint, he said, is that black and Latino clergy rarely are called to lead white congregations.

Black clergy also complained when Doss hired a consultant to help heal racial tensions in the diocese without consulting them. At last year's convention, black clergy and 400 members of their congregations marched in in a silent show of protest.

With the potential flashpoint of the diocesan convention safely past, many in the diocese apparently seem to be taking a "wait and see" approach now that Steinke's intervention has begun.

"The diocese is a family trying to heal," the Rev. Peter Stimpson, chair of the diocesan wellness committee that is overseeing Steinke's work, told the *Star-Ledger*. "That is the main point."

--Jerry Hames is editor of *Episcopal Life*, the national newspaper of the Episcopal Church. James H. Thrall, deputy director of news and information of the Episcopal Church, contributed to this article.

97-1725

Audit of Episcopal Church trust funds under way as group files complaint

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) An attorney representing a small group calling itself the Trust Group has filed a complaint with the New York state attorney general claiming possible mishandling of trust funds held by the Episcopal Church.

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Crosby had demanded that the Trust Group be permitted to conduct its own review of the fund's accounts, and when that demand was refused, said, "we have no choice now but to seek the support of Attorney General (Dennis) Vacco."

In letters to Crosby, however, both Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and Duggan explained that the Executive Council had already authorized an independent audit of the trust funds, which is under way, and that the audit's results will be made public. "I am therefore not willing to permit further private investigations to be conducted in the midst of what I have concluded to be a proper, official investigation of the same matter," Browning wrote.

As of the first week of April, there was no indication whether the attorney general's office would consider the Trust Group's complaint.

Audit focuses on trust funds

Duggan said that the audit is being conducted by Arthur Andersen & Co., the firm chosen to conduct the church's regular annual audits after the Cooke embezzlement, and should be completed by June. The trust funds have been reviewed annually as part of the church's regular audits, Duggan stressed, but said that this special audit will focus specifically on the funds starting with the year 1991, the year Cooke apparently began her embezzling. Specifically, the audit will seek to determine that "the ending balances in each fund are correct and that during the years under examination the income from each fund was used for the purposes the donor intended," Browning wrote.

At the time that Cooke's embezzlement was discovered, the accounting firm of Coopers and Lybrand "carefully examined all cash transactions of church accounts that appeared also to involve the personal accounts of the former treasurer," Browning wrote. "That exhaustive review revealed no basis for concluding that any income or principal of the trust funds had been diverted."

Even so, Browning noted, because the review discovered that "the operating description of a small number of the trust funds with restricted uses had been changed," Duggan recommended a separate audit "to make sure that no errors had been made in the annual management of the funds." The changes, Browning wrote, "appeared to relate, not to the uses to which income was to be put, but rather to the level of supervision or approval required for the distribution of the income."

While Duggan promised that "any necessary corrective actions" will be taken should the audit reveal any problems with the funds, he denied that he had ever said that "as many as 20 percent of our endowment funds had had their income misused or misdirected," as Crosby claimed. "That is inaccurate," he said in a letter to diocesan administrators.

Following the initial audit this year, Duggan said, a third of the trust funds will be audited separately each year on a rotating basis to ensure that each account is examined regularly.

Program, Budget and Finance endorses audit process

At its March meeting, the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance responded to Crosby's allegations by expressing "confidence in the processes initiated by the presiding bishop and treasurer of the Episcopal Church." The committee also noted that "this audit was begun long before any questions were raised by Mr. Crosby and his clients."

The committee echoed Browning's explanation that "it is impractical and inappropriate for small groups of 'concerned' church members to be given untrammelled access to all the records" of the trust funds, "especially when a thorough audit of those same records by an independent, dispassionate firm of highly professional auditors has been under way for some months."

Approximately half of the trust funds managed by the church are designated to support various aspects of the church's ministry, according to Catherine Lynch, assistant treasurer. The other half include funds that are designated for other purposes but managed by the church on behalf of individuals or groups.

According to Crosby, the Trust Group includes Bishops Maurice Benitez, retired bishop of Texas; Gordon T. Charlton, retired suffragan bishop of Texas; and Alex Dickson, retired bishop of West Tennessee. Also belonging to the group are the Rev. Tim Smith of Mobile, Alabama; Stewart Broad of Chevy Chase, Maryland; Lee Buck of Atlanta, Georgia; Raymond J. Dague of Syracuse, New York; and James McGehee, Jr. of Memphis, Tennessee.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church.

97-1726

Long Island investigation report delayed, effort hampered by unofficial inquiry

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) In a report to the Diocese of Long Island, March 3, the diocesan standing committee explained that an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct by Long Island clergy will take longer than originally expected.

"As many of you know," the committee stated, "we had hoped to be able to present a report to the people of the diocese and to the wider church much sooner than it now appears possible or advisable." The report also was shared with the House of Bishops meeting in

Kanuga.

The standing committee was charged with overseeing an investigation into claims made in *Penthouse* magazine that a Long Island priest lured young Brazilian men to the diocese for homosexual orgies with clergy. While numerous interviews have been conducted to determine what happened, the report notes that "each line of questioning tends to open the need to make further inquiries to insure we are 'getting to the bottom' of the matter." A firm specializing in forensic auditing also is looking into any possibilities of financial culpability by those involved.

"We believe we are making significant advances in the inquiry," the report notes, adding that Bishop O'Kelley Whitaker, retired bishop of Central New York, who is heading the investigation, "has told us that a clear sense of what actually took place is emerging."

The final report may also be delayed until it is clear whether the Brazilian men involved intend to follow through on threats to file a lawsuit, the standing committee said.

Unofficial inquiry hampers efforts

The report warned that the official investigation has been hampered, however, by a "parallel investigation" being "partially funded by persons outside the diocese." The unofficial inquiry "opposes the stand taken by the delegates at convention that the people of the Diocese of Long Island themselves, through the official bodies of the diocese, can deal with the issues raised."

Those conducting the unofficial investigation have been "wrongly representing themselves as official investigators of the dioceses," causing confusion to some witnesses, the report notes. The report did not specify who was conducting the parallel inquiry.

"You placed the responsibility for this investigation in the hands of your duly-elected representatives on the Standing Committee," the report concludes. "We ask that you keep confidence in us as we continue to pursue this matter to a full and truthful conclusion."

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.



news briefs

97-1727

So when is Easter anyway?

(WCC) In an effort to address a central symbol of Christian disunity--differing dates for Easter--church representatives at a recent World Council of Churches meeting have proposed a possible solution. Eastern and Western churches calculate the date for Easter by the same method established by the Council of Nicea in 325, which proclaimed that the church's holiest day should fall on the Sunday following the first full moon after the March equinox. The dates fall differently in most years, however, because the churches follow different calculations of the equinox and full moon. Since the dates will coincide on April 15 in the year 2001, the meeting in Aleppo, Syria, March 5-10, proposed using precise modern astronomical calculations to set the date from that Easter on. The astronomical observations will be based on the meridian of Jerusalem, the place of Christ's death and resurrection. The proposal will be sent to churches throughout the world together with a chart showing possible dates for Easter in the first 25 years of the 21st century according to both the new and the old methods. The consultation recognized that while theological differences are not at stake in the thorny issue of dating Easter, the question of the proper date is tied closely to perceptions of self-identity for some churches. "The consultation therefore concluded that there will be need for great pastoral sensitivity among church members as the proposal is pursued," according to a WCC news release.

Presiding Bishop's Fund gives additional grants for flood, tornado relief

(ENS) As states struck by tornadoes and floods in early March continued to try to repair the damage and rebuild lives, the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief expanded its assistance with additional grants. Having made two initial grants to the Diocese of Arkansas for tornado relief (\$25,000) and the Diocese of West Virginia (\$15,000) for flood relief, the fund added grants of \$25,000 to the dioceses of Lexington (Kentucky), West Tennessee and Southern Ohio, where heavy rains and swollen rivers created widespread flooding. Contributions can be marked for disaster relief and sent to: The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, c/o Banker's Trust Company, Box 12043, Newark, New Jersey 07101.

Archbishop Carey considers early retirement

(ENS) Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey recently disclosed that he is considering retiring five years early from his position. In an interview for the five-part English television series "Archbishop," Carey said that "there is no doubt that in five years I will be ready to hand over to someone else." He described the position as "a very wearing job. You pour yourself into it and it's not only the physical side of it, because there is a physical demand, but it's also spiritually and emotionally demanding because you are being hit from many different angles." After the interview, Carey stressed that no date for retirement was set in stone. His office issued a statement saying that in the interview he was "anticipating how he might feel. This should not be taken as an actual decision. It is far too soon for that. It will obviously depend on how the archbishop and others feel in the future."

WCC official foresees lengthy process of reconciliation in Rwanda

(WCC) "Reconciliation and forgiveness in Rwanda will be the result of a long, long journey," said Geneviève Jacques, a specialist in international affairs for the World Council of Churches (WCC). Jacques, who recently returned from a visit to Rwanda, said the people there are under heavy pressure from the international community to begin forgiving each other immediately. "This is deeply hurting those who had loved ones killed in the genocide which swept the country in 1994," she said. "Today is still a time of heavy silence between the Rwandans. External pressure for reconciliation and forgiveness shows a complete lack of understanding that it is only three years since the genocide and that this was the result of a deep and long-standing ideology based on ethnic division." While in Rwanda, Jacques attended a Pan-African Conference on Peace, Gender and Development and a seminar organized by the Protestant Council of Rwanda (CPR) which considered the theme "Christianity Before, During and After the Genocide in Rwanda." Jacques reported that a workshop organizer at the CPR seminar put the participants under heavy moral pressure, based on Christian principles, to forgive those who had done them wrong. In response, one woman wrote on the wall: "How can I forgive as nobody has yet come to me to ask forgiveness?"

Carey criticizes Runcie's revelations of dealings with royal family

(ENI) Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey criticized his predecessor, Robert Runcie, in a recently broadcast BBC television program. Carey based his criticism on statements attributed to Runcie in the book, "Robert Runcie: The Reluctant Archbishop" by Humphrey Carpenter, published in 1996. Runcie described the Prince of Wales, who is heir to the British throne, as "pious" but as having "given up on the Church of England before I arrived." Of the prince's now dissolved marriage to Lady Diana Spencer, Runcie said: "We thought it was an arranged marriage, but my own view was, 'They're a nice couple, and she'll grow into it.'" He also reported, with apparent agreement, the view that Diana was "a schemer." Carey criticized these remarks, suggesting that they could undermine people's

faith in the confidentiality of talks with priests. He declared that his "whole ministry is based on the fact that if you want to talk to me privately you can be absolutely sure that whatever you say is safe and it goes to my grave, with no indiscretion . . ." Runcie is known to be concerned about his biography, and the author has had to fend off claims by critics that he duped the former archbishop by publishing material intended only for background information.

Congregation members charge Long Island bishop with canon violation

(ENS) Twenty-one members of St. George's Church in Flushing, New York, and three clergy from the diocese filed a complaint, March 4, against Bishop Orris G. Walker Jr., of the Diocese of Long Island, claiming that Walker violated canon law in not approving the congregation's choice of rector. The charges, filed with Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, assert that Walker said that the Rev. Franco C. Kwan was not "duly qualified" to serve as rector. Kwan has been serving the Chinese congregation at St. George's since 1988. The parish, consisting of more than 200 congregants, conducts services in English, Chinese, and Spanish. Church canons require Browning to appoint a review panel of five to seven bishops to determine whether the charges, if proven true, would constitute a violation of the canons. If that first review indicates that the canons might have been violated, a second panel of clergy and lay people will be appointed to decide whether a presentment should be brought against Walker. A review panel recently dismissed similar charges against Bishop Frank Vest of Southern Virginia, who refused to approve the election of the Rev. Dr. Peter Toon to serve as rector of Christ Church in Danville, Virginia.

New pension plan adopted for national church's lay employees

(ENS) On the heels of implementing a new compensation plan for all national church employees, the Episcopal Church has initiated a different pension program for its lay employees. Starting April 3, a defined contribution plan administered by the Church Pension Fund replaces a self-funded defined benefits plan. The former program promised to pay lay employees a set amount or "benefit" each month that they lived past retirement. New employees waited five years to be vested in the plan. Under the new plan, the church will make regular "contributions" into an investment fund for each employee. The contributions will equal five percent of each employee's salary, with a promise to match an additional four percent of the employee's own contributions. New employees will be vested in the new plan after one year. According to Treasurer Stephen Duggan, the new plan offers employees the advantages of a portable plan with almost immediate vesting, while saving the church an estimated \$1.6 million each year. All lay people currently working for the church will be vested automatically in the old plan, even if they have not worked the required five years. A variety of options will be developed, he said, to pay out the old plan's benefits, in addition to the standard payment of monthly benefits at retirement.

Archangels accompany Pope's Easter Internet launch

(ENT) Easter Sunday marked the official Internet launch of Pope John Paul II on the World Wide Web, thanks to a new Vatican website powered by three computers named after the archangels Gabriel, Michael and Raphael. Announcing the launch of the Vatican's website (<http://www.vatican.va>), Bishop Claudio Maria Celli, a Vatican official, said that the Pope was "fascinated" by the "enormous possibilities" the new information technologies and the Internet offer for evangelization. "The Holy See welcomes this new challenge, and with respect and care, wishes to enter into dialogue with all," he said. The website has been made possible by computer technology from Digital Italy and Digital Equipment Corporation. Alberto Fresco of Digital Equipment said that he was convinced that "the Vatican's Internet site will soon become one of the most visited websites, particularly because of the jubilee year 2000." The website--which to begin with will operate in six languages (Italian, English, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese)--will include all the speeches and documents of Pope John Paul II, biographical information, and the main documents of the Roman Curia. The website will also offer the daily bulletins of the Vatican's press office. The Vatican hopes to add two further languages--Chinese and Arabic--and to link the website to the Vatican museums and the Vatican library, making it possible to consult documents linked to a thousand years of history.

Bishop and sheikh at odds over Ugandan deaths

(ENT) Sheikh Sulaiman Kakeeto, leader of an Islamic group in Uganda, the Tabligh Muslims, sharply criticized an Anglican bishop recently, accusing him of damaging relations with Muslims. Kakeeto had demanded that Bishop Zebidee Masereka, of the Diocese of South Ruwenzori, retract alleged remarks suggesting that some Muslims wanted to force all Ugandans--and all people of Africa--to become Muslims. He said that remarks made by Masereka during a funeral service on January 16 had "soured" relations between Christians and Muslims. The funeral service was held for a clergyman, Peter Bwambale, who had been abducted and killed by guerrillas. Bwambale had been taken from his home in Kasese on November 15, 1996, and killed in Zaire, along with two Zairean Anglican priests, Matayo Sabuni and Douglas Munzombo. The rebels who killed the priests are trying to overthrow the government of Uganda's President, Yoweri Museveni. During the funeral, Masereka said, "The tragic death of Reverend Bwambale . . . raises many questions about Christian-Muslim relations in the country. One cannot avoid to think of this wanton killing as part of the long-term plan to force Ugandans and all people of Africa to become Muslims." Kakeeto said Masereka's speech was intended to "blackmail Muslims, and if he does not apologize, Muslims will interpret it to be the official position of the Church of Uganda."

Australian church leaders welcome quashing of euthanasia law

(ENT) Many Australian church leaders, including the Anglican and Roman Catholic archbishops of Sydney, have welcomed the recent decision by the country's federal

parliament to overturn a law legalizing voluntary euthanasia in Australia's Northern Territory. The Northern Territory euthanasia law--the world's first law permitting voluntary euthanasia--came into force last year. Four people have died with medical assistance under the law and two other people were awaiting medical assistance to end their lives when the federal parliament voted on the issue. The parliament also voted down an amendment which would have allowed the two people to die legally with the help of their doctor. Church leaders have been almost unanimous in their condemnation but surveys have suggested that 40 percent of the country's Protestant church-goers think people should have the choice of death rather than suffer the torment of incurable illness. Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Harry Goodhew, said he was deeply pleased with the federal vote. "While we feel a deep sense of compassion for those who are suffering and longing for release from pain, yet we must recognize that the Senate vote shows that there is still a sense of reverence for life in our community," he said. "To condone the deliberate killing of the most vulnerable in society is to risk the status of all human life in our community."

Survey of scientists finds a stability in faith in God

(NYT) Scientists have been accused of playing God when they clone sheep, and of naysaying God when they insist that evolution be taught in school, but a new study indicates that many scientists believe in God by the most mainstream definition of the concept. Repeating verbatim a famous survey first conducted in 1916, Edward J. Larson of the University of Georgia has found that the depth of religious faith among scientists has not changed regardless of whatever scientific and technical advances this century has wrought. Then as now, about 40 percent of the responding biologists, physicists and mathematicians said they believed in a God who, by the survey's strict definition, actively communicates with humankind and to whom one may pray "in the expectation of receiving an answer." Roughly 15 percent in both surveys claimed to be agnostic or to have "no definite belief" regarding the question, while about 42 percent in 1916 and about 45 percent today said they did not believe in God as specified in the questionnaire, although whether they believed in some other definition of a deity or an almighty being was not addressed. Although Gallup polls of the general U.S. population have found that about 93 percent of people surveyed profess a belief in God, those familiar with the survey said that, given the questionnaire's exceedingly restrictive definition of God--narrower than the standard Gallup question--and given scientist's training to say exactly what they mean and nothing more, the 40 percent figure is impressively high.

EPF to issue award honoring Mordechai Vanunu

(ENS) The Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) recently announced that Mordechai Vanunu will be the first recipient of a new award named in his honor. The Mordechai Vanunu Award for Sacrifice and Moral Witness in the Struggle for Peace with Justice was established by the EPF in October 1996 as a way to honor Vanunu and to focus on his

imprisonment. The award will be presented at the EPF dinner during the 72nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church in July of this year. Convicted of espionage and treason at a closed-door trial in Israel, Mordechai Vanunu received an 18-year sentence for exposing his government's secret nuclear weapons program, where he once worked as a technician. He has been held in solitary confinement for more than ten years. His story was published by the *London Sunday Times* in 1986 and confirmed that Israel had become a major nuclear weapons power, with 100 to 200 warheads of advanced design. During his March visit to the Middle East, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning presented a letter to Israeli president Ezer Weizman requesting access to Vanunu so that he could deliver a letter from EPF notifying him of the award. No member of Browning's party was permitted contact with Vanunu.

NCC reissues call for U.S. sanctions against Burma

(ENS) A National Council of Churches (NCC) official recently returned from Southeast Asia with reports of violence against refugees on the border between Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand and has reissued a call for the United States to impose sanctions on Myanmar. "Burma is a pariah government and no one should do business with them," said the Rev. Larry Tankersley, director of the Southern Asian Office for the Church World Service Unit of the NCC. Tankersley returned from a trip to the Thai-Myanmar border with news of increased atrocities against refugees who have been living there. "While I was there, the military Burmese government--the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)--had begun attacking refugee camps, burning them down and committing atrocities against the people, causing them to flee into Thailand," he said. The NCC supports the Burma Border Coalition, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) which provides relief aid to the 100,000 refugees on the border. Also at issue, according to Tankersley, is the treatment of the democratic opposition in Myanmar. In February, Nobel Peace Prize winner and democratic advocate Aung San Suu Kyi appealed for international sanctions, saying there was a "large scale repression of the democracy movement" under way and on March 4, Aung San Suu Kyi complained of new arrests and intimidation tactics. Tankersley and other church leaders were turned away from a meeting with Aung San on November 16, 1996, leading them to conclude that she was still essentially under house arrest.

Tutu needs more cancer therapy

(ENS) South African Nobel peace laureate Desmond Tutu recently announced that his prostate cancer had spread and that he would go to the United States for radiation therapy. Tutu, 65, a leading campaigner in the fight against apartheid, had most of his prostate cut out in January when the gland was diagnosed as cancerous. Doctors told him at the time that he would need further surgery or treatment with radiation and hormones. Tutu, former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town and currently chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission probing apartheid crimes, said in a statement that after consulting doctors in the United States last week he had decided on a combination of hormone treatment and

radiotherapy. "Medical specialists in Cape Town will begin a three-month course of hormone treatment . . . After the treatment, I plan to have the radiotherapy at a clinic in the United States," Tutu said. "This will take two months." He said that while he was in the United States, he would set up an office through which he would keep close touch with the truth commission, which is investigating human rights abuses on both sides of the apartheid conflict.

Lutherans, Roman Catholics find "fundamental consensus"

(ENS) The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Vatican have agreed on wording that could end four centuries of bickering between the two churches. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification brings global attention to a "fundamental consensus" reached by the ELCA and the Roman Catholic Church in the 1980s. "Justification is a central concept in how both of our churches understand the gospel of Jesus Christ," said the Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, director of the ELCA department of ecumenical affairs. It's also "the core of the difficulty . . . Over that doctrine there were condemnations thrown back and forth between the Roman Catholic Church and the then-emerging Lutheran community . . . not so much against individuals but against teachings," he said. For Lutherans, the doctrine of justification is "that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith." The declaration states that Roman Catholics agree but have a different way of looking at "grace" than Lutherans.

ELCA asked to recommit to multicultural plan

(ENS) The new multicultural mission strategy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) calls for all members of the church "to make a renewed affirmation of and commitment to" a 10 percent membership goal of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. The strategy calls for the ELCA to support and encourage the ministry of congregations with predominantly African-American, American Indian and Native Alaskan, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Hispanic members. In 1987, the ELCA adopted as a goal that within 10 years at least 10 percent of the membership of the church would be people of color and/or people whose primary language is other than English. "The 10-year deadline for this churchwide goal has arrived," states the "Recommitment to a Strategy for Proclamation of the Gospel," but the present 2.13 percent membership of people of color and/or primary language other than English "falls dramatically short" of the original goal.

Church officials warn of growth of racism in Europe

(ENI) The general secretaries of four major church organizations based in Geneva recently condemned "the racism which exists in Europe and our churches" and have warned

that the "specter of anti-Semitism" is "haunting" Europe. The statement, which comes in the European Year Against Racism, was issued by the general secretaries of the Conference of European Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches. All four organizations have member churches in Europe. The European Union, which has 15 member states in western Europe, has declared 1997 the European Year Against Racism. 1997 is also the Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People. "The continuing existence of the blight of racism is an affront to the ministry of Jesus Christ," the general secretaries said. They pointed out that many local congregations had shown solidarity with the "victims of racism and xenophobia" but called for a re-doubling of efforts against racism. "We view, with deep misgiving, the growing acceptance by individuals and political parties, of organizations which promote racist views," they said. "Migrants, immigrants and refugees become scapegoats for unemployment, crime and a host of other problems throughout Europe."

Southern African Anglican bishops apologize to homosexual people

(ENI) The bishops of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa recently apologized to homosexual people who have been hurt by the "unacceptable prejudice" against gays and lesbians within the church. The bishops, meeting in synod in Cape Town, said in a press statement released on March 6 that "as a church we have been responsible over the centuries for rejecting many people because of their sexual orientation The harshness and hostility to homosexual people within our church [are] neither acceptable nor . . . in accord with our Lord's love of all people. We repent of this attitude and ask forgiveness of many homosexual people who have been hurt, rejected and marginalized because of this deep-seated prejudice," the bishops said. However, they rejected all forms of promiscuity which, they said, dehumanized many relationships. "The church's position is that sex is for life-long marriage with a person of the opposite sex for companionship, sexual fulfillment and procreation. The reality is that divorce and remarriage, polygamy, same-sex unions, single-parent families, and persons living together outside marriage do exist. As a church, we have to find loving, pastoral and creative ways of dealing with all these situations," the statement concluded.

Hindu convert to Christianity to succeed Mother Teresa

(ENI) A Hindu convert to Christianity has been elected to succeed Mother Teresa of Calcutta as leader of the Missionaries of Charity, the order of nuns founded and led by Mother Teresa to promote her vocation to work with the poorest of the poor. The Archbishop of Calcutta, Henry D'Souza, announced on March 13 that Sister Nirmala would succeed Mother Teresa, who, at the age of 86, is suffering from heart and respiratory problems. The transfer of power, it is reported, will take place immediately. Sister Nirmala, 63, is believed to have been the only Indian on the short list of candidates to take over as superior general. She was born in Ranchi in the state of Bihar of a military family with a

Nepalese background and has been in charge of the order's contemplative wing since 1979. The decision was made by the order's general chapter, consisting of 123 delegates from around the world, which has been meeting in closed session since mid-January.

Internet gives Russian Orthodox new means for world-wide mission

(ENI) Orthodox Christians with World Wide Web access who want to hear the views of Patriarch Alexy II, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, can now use their Internet browser to visit the electronic website recently established by the church. A message from Alexy on the church's website invokes "God's blessing upon all users of the new information channel." The recently inaugurated website, which includes photographs of Alexy and pictures of Russian Orthodox churches, provides first-hand information, in Russian and in English, about the history and the contemporary life of the church--Russia's largest religious body. Deacon Alexander Boulekov, director of communications of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Church Relations, said, "We want to provide as much material as possible about the life of the church" on the website. The site was set up in response to what Boulekov described as "a wave of often unobjective and distorted media coverage of church activities" such as media attacks last autumn against the church, and particularly the Department of External Relations headed by Metropolitan Kirill, for its alleged involvement in massive imports of duty-free alcohol and tobacco. The official website of the Russian Orthodox Church is: <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru> (in Russian) and <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/en.htm> (in English).

Search committee appointed for new dean and president

(ENS) The executive committee of the General Theological Seminary board of trustees recently created an eight-member team to search for a new dean and president for the 180-year old institution. Details on how the search would proceed were left up to the search committee, but trustees gave top priority to receiving input from other seminary constituencies, such as faculty, administrative staff, students and alumni/ae. "The selection of a new dean and president is too important a task for any single group to undertake in isolation," said Mellick Belshaw, retired bishop of New Jersey and chair of the new committee. "It is of critical importance that the views of all seminary constituencies be heard." Belshaw also expressed full confidence in the search committee to determine its own methods and praised the collective experience of its members. The search committee's first meeting was scheduled for April 3.

Allan Boesak's trial on 30 charges set for August

(ENI) Dr. Allan Boesak, one of South Africa's most prominent clergymen in the struggle against apartheid, appeared briefly in the Cape Town Magistrate's Court recently to face 21 counts of theft and nine of fraud. The court appearance follows allegations of misappropriation of donor funds from DanChurchAid earmarked for victims of apartheid.

Boesak was head of the now-defunct Foundation for Peace and Justice through which the DanChurchAid money was meant to be channelled. The charges follow protracted investigations and international publicity about the case. After Boesak's court appearance, South Africa's Justice Minister, Dullah Omar, said that DanChurchAid had asked the Office for Serious Economic Offences, a police unit, to investigate the charges. Boesak, who has consistently protested his innocence on all the charges, was not asked to plead at the hearing. "It won't be an easy road. I'm spiritually strong ... God is with us," he told supporters outside the magistrate's court. The trial is set for August 4 in the Cape High Court.

Female bishops opt out of pre-Lambeth London visit

(AJ) A Church of England priest recently criticized the women bishops of the Anglican Communion for having cancelled a proposed meeting with the English Church. The Rev. Donald Reeves, rector of St. James' Church, near London's Picadilly Circus, called the cancellation "discourteous," especially after all the bishops had originally enthusiastically accepted his invitation. Reeves said that he proposed the visit in order to allow the bishops to meet together and to allow the English to meet the women bishops and become more comfortable with the idea of women in the episcopacy. Bishop Victoria Matthews, suffragan in the Diocese of Toronto, said she was initially excited about the invitation, when she believed Bishop Penelope Jamieson of Dunedin, New Zealand, would be coming. It showed promise, Matthews said, that St. James had a commitment from the bishop who was furthest away. "Then I had gotten a fax saying (Bishop Jamieson) was now not going to come. Then, Barbara Harris (suffragan of Massachusetts) told me she was not going to be able to come, at which point it ceased to be a meeting of women bishops," Matthews said. Reeves had raised \$8,800 for the visit and had arranged two public meetings at St. James Church where the women would celebrate the eucharist.

Washington National Cathedral to establish historic girls choir

(ENS) Washington National Cathedral recently announced that by fall of this year a newly established Episcopal cathedral girls choir composed of students at the National Cathedral School will begin singing at services. "The establishment of the choir realizes the cathedral's dream of including the sound of girls' voices in worship, of teaching girls the cycle of Anglican sung services," said Cathedral Dean Nathan D. Baxter. The Cathedral Girls Choir will include 20 to 24 first and second sopranos in grades seven through twelve at the National Cathedral School for Girls. As do the boy choristers, they will receive financial assistance for maintaining a demanding singing schedule in addition to a full academic workload. According to the announcement from the cathedral, this is the first Episcopal cathedral girls choir associated with a school in the United States.

World Council of Churches examining its future

(ENS) Major discussions on the role of the World Council of Churches are now taking place within the WCC and among the member churches, based on a draft document, "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC." A recent meeting of the WCC's executive committee discussed the document and responses it has received so far. A final version will be approved by the WCC central committee in September and forwarded to delegates to the WCC Eighth Assembly in Zimbabwe, September 10-22, 1998. The executive council, meeting in Cyprus in mid-February, heard encouraging reports about WCC finances, based largely on improved exchange rates and better investment performance. Despite the increased general income, the committee was warned that the WCC could face some significant reductions in 1998 and 1999 because the support of the Evangelical Church in Germany, the council's largest contributor, will decrease.

Shell and WCC agree to "a common concern" for people of Ogoniland

(ENS) Following a recent meeting of representatives from Shell and WCC, the organizations issued a "joint communique" saying that "the WCC and Shell International Limited share a common concern for the people of Nigeria and the developments in the country." The meeting was prompted by a WCC report that accused Shell of being responsible for pollution, accidents and oil spills in the Ogoniland section of Nigeria. The communique did not acknowledge errors in the report, *Ogoni--the Struggle Continues*, but it said the WCC agreed to "verify facts and statistical data in the WCC report which Shell has called to its attention as being in error." The report, issued in January by the WCC's Unit III (Justice, Peace and Creation), cited a "socio-political malaise" throughout Nigeria. Intimidation, rape, arrests, torture, shooting and looting by soldiers are a part of life in Ogoniland, the report suggested. The report called upon Shell to take a more active role in protesting human rights abuses in Ogoniland, to accept responsibility for the Ebubu oil spill in 1970, and to clean up existing oil spills. Shell had attacked the accuracy of some of the WCC allegations, which included "eyewitness testimony to oil spills, dumping of oil into waterways and pollution, gas flares, and over-ground oil pipes that crisscross Ogoniland."

Presbyterians ban ordination of gays

(ENS) In a major setback to Christian gay-rights activists, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recently voted to make its ban on the ordination of homosexuals part of church law. On March 18, the ban was approved by regional bodies in Miami and Charlotte, North Carolina, bringing the tally to 88 in favor of the ban and 60 against. This gave the measure a majority of votes. The Book of Order--the church's constitution--will be changed to require chastity of single ministers. "It says to the country that Presbyterians are committed to reaffirming their biblical center for faith and practice," said the Rev. Jack Haberer, moderator of the Presbyterian Coalition, a group favoring the amendment. But Scott Anderson, co-moderator of Presbyterians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns, said the change will

force more gay and lesbian Presbyterians out of the 2.7 million member church. "It's one more club that has been used to beat up gay and lesbian people in the Presbyterian Church," he said.

People

Bishop Peter James Lee of Virginia was recently presented the 1997 Jessie Ball duPont award. The award is given annually to recognize an individual and his or her institution who "together have demonstrated the highest ideals of leadership, creativity, courage and community service." In a letter to Lee, duPont fund executive director Dr. Sherry Magill wrote that "We recognize your courageous and bold commitment to community leadership and social ministry." The award carries a \$40,000 grant to the recipient's institution and a \$10,000 discretionary award to the recipient.

Bishop Victoria Matthews, suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Toronto, was elected diocesan bishop of Edmonton on the fifth ballot, thereby becoming the first woman elected diocesan bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Bishop James T. Yashiro, primate of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Episcopal Church of Japan) and bishop of the Diocese of Kita Kanto, suffered respiratory failure after a long illness and died on March 12. He was 65.



news features

97-1728

Presiding bishop finds growing pessimism over future of Mideast peace process

by James Solheim

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning returned from a sobering mid-March trip through the Middle East with a message for American political leaders--U.S. policies are now perceived as the obstacle in a rapidly deteriorating peace process.

In a statement released April 3, and in correspondence with President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Browning said that he was bombarded with "the perception that the United States is completely one-sided" in the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

"Time and time again," Browning said, "respected religious leaders--Christian and Muslim--in Israel, Cyprus, Lebanon and Syria spoke to me of the sole U.S. veto of (United Nations) Security Council resolutions condemning behavior that every other nation found abhorrent and provocative," the decision by the Israeli government to proceed with new housing settlements in traditionally Arab East Jerusalem. That decision was cited as the most serious threat to the peace process.

Browning warned that "this one-sided relationship... will continue to frustrate a durable and just settlement."

Browning was in the Middle East to attend a meeting of Anglican Communion primates at St. George's College in Jerusalem. Accompanied by his wife Patti, as well as Dr. Dale Bishop, a Middle East expert on the staff of the United Church of Christ, and the Rev. Patrick Mauney, the Episcopal Church's director for Anglican and Global Affairs, he spent 10 days meeting with political and religious leaders in the region.

Greetings to Evangelicals in Cyprus

In his last official visit to the region as presiding bishop, Browning told the Fourth Assembly of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches in Cyprus that he remembers especially "some churches in the region that suffer persecution and martyrdom, even as they continue their courageous witness to the One who by his death and resurrection has made all things new and reconciled the world to himself."

Browning had hoped to visit Iran and its Anglican bishop Iraj Mottahedeh. According to Mauney, the bishop's role there has been to "lead his church in difficult and dangerous times" yet he done so with "gentle tenacity and great personal courage and integrity," adding that "there is no cheap grace in Iran. Being a member of a minority religious community is costly and risky."

Peace process being bulldozed

Greeting Browning as "a venerable brother," Imam Shamseddine, head of the Muslim Shi'ites Council in Lebanon, was quite open about his anxiety over the future of the peace process. He called the bias of the Clinton Administration "very disturbing" and contended that the Palestinians, Lebanon and Syria are "being totally ignored." As a result, "the Arab people have lost confidence in the U.S. government" and the only appeal is to the "moral strength of the American people and the churches."

In response, Browning floated the idea of a meeting of religious leaders from the area, both Muslim and Christian, to help educate the American public to the real issues and to add a more urgent tone to the peace process. The imam said it was "a very important idea" and he promised to "take counsel with other leaders" to see if they would support it. "The situation in Lebanon and the Middle East has become much too dangerous to leave to politicians and the military," he said.

"As the bulldozers begin the housing settlement in East Jerusalem, it is the peace process that is being bulldozed," he lamented.

He pointed out that the Lebanese conflict "was not a war of religions but a civil war, fueled by local and regional politics, complicated by the presence of Palestinian refugees. The relations between Christians and Muslims here is sound." Yet the Lebanese face a difficult attempt to rebuild their society, to reclaim national sovereignty while under occupation by both Syrians and Israelis.

There is no American policy

Foreign Minister Fares Boueiz complained that those making decisions for small countries like Lebanon "don't understand our problems." He added, "There is no American policy in the Middle East--other than support for Israel. Why aren't United Nations policies implemented in this part of the world? This is the real crisis between us and the U.S."

The foreign minister is convinced that "the U.S. wants Lebanon to sign a peace treaty with Israel, at all costs. And they are using the ban on visits and trade to pressure us to sign."

As a participant in the Madrid conference to help establish a peace process, the foreign minister said that the role of the U.S. as "the driving force and the honest power-broker" was crucial in convincing the Israelis to participate. "The election of Netanyahu effectively cancelled the policy of land for peace," he said. "There is no more peace process now. Netanyahu doesn't really want peace, he wants to solve a security problem.... It is not

possible to restart the peace process unless Israeli politics changes or the role of the U.S. does."

Outside influences against peace

With 40,000 Syrian soldiers and half a million Palestinian refugees inside of Lebanon "we can't say we are at peace," the Maronite Patriarch of Lebanon, Cardinal Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, told his guests. "We have been waiting 20 years for implementation of the UN resolutions."

With 19 different cultural/religious communities in Lebanon, "each trying to maintain its identity," Lebanon faces a delicate balancing act in its efforts to reestablish some kind of national identity. "Equilibrium of these communities is the reason Lebanon exists," the patriarch observed. "The role of Christians is to witness to Christian values in a society that is not Christian. We are here, and have been here for 1300 years, and we will stay here, but we need moral help" since Syrians are in control and there is always the threat of annexation to Syria. "That would be the end of the Christian presence." Like other Christian leaders he is deeply worried about the emigration of Christians and fears the paradox that a day might come "when there are no Christians in the land of Christ."

Lebanon at a turning point

"The Lebanese are good at both destruction and construction," said Catholicos Aram of the Armenian Orthodox Church. "We are in the midst of reconstruction, including spiritual... We are at a turning point."

While he described the situation in Lebanon as "unstable," full of "uncertainties and ambiguities," he warned that the process of reconciliation will be slow. He repeated the charge that "the United States has no policy towards Lebanon because it's not very important." When he met with President Clinton last summer he told him that "supporting Israel should not be at the expense of others."

Aram would like to see the issue of Jerusalem moved to the top of the peace agenda "because we would be dealing not with a city but with a holy place deeply rooted in the heart and culture of these people--all people of the region." He said that he liked the idea of a conference of church leaders because he sensed that "churches around the world are becoming more interested in the Middle East, especially the future of Christian churches in the area."

Christians losing Lebanon

"Deep down any Christian or Muslim loves Lebanon," Metropolitan Elias Audi of the Greek Orthodox Church told the group in trying to explain what holds the society together. "But Christians came out of the war as losers so they can't be strong collaborators in the decisions of the country. So many of them leave."

He is worried that Christians, who fear the Islamization of Lebanon and the weak

economic climate, will conclude that they have no stake in the future. "Christians are asking, What is our future?" If left alone, the Lebanese might be able to work things out but that is no longer likely, given the politics of the region. "Both Christians and Muslims still want to live together in peace."

"God's plan for Lebanon is not clear," said Greek Orthodox Patriarch Hazim. "We don't have much of a voice as Christians. The simple fact is that Lebanon is 75 percent occupied.... And when you are inhabited you soon don't begin to recognize yourself, you lose your identity. Yet we hope for some unexpected light." In the meantime, the relationship among the churches "has never been better. We have created a spirit of fellowship and cooperation; we feel at home with each other."

Although clearly worried about the dwindling Christian presence, he added, "We shall continue to witness as much as we can. We shall not help those who want Christ to disappear from this area."

After a meeting with faculty and students at the Near East School of Theology, the party traveled south to Sidon to view projects of the Middle East Council of Churches and visit a Palestinian refugee camp of 70,000 people. Teachers at an elementary school said in their conversations that they and their families had never known another life and that, with a cut in funds from the United Nations, it was becoming more difficult to escape and build another life.

Christians in Damascus enjoy tolerance

Christians in Syria said that they are enjoying a period of tolerance because "President Assad respects all the churches," according to Melkite Patriarch Hakim. He expressed deep concern over the future of Jerusalem, however. "As the pope has said, if we lose Jerusalem our holy places will become museums," he said, adding that one-third of his church members have left in the last 30 years and several of his churches are already museums. "If the churches cooperated to build housing I'm sure the people would remain."

"We are mirrors that reflect the spirit of Jesus Christ and Mohammed," said 85-year-old Sheikh Ahmed Kuftano, Grand Mufti of the Syrian Arab Republic, in welcoming the party. In a long and cordial conversation between friends who met on a previous trip, he added. "We consider Jesus Christ our uncle so that means you are our cousins."

While he was optimistic about relations between Christians and Muslims, his demeanor turned gloomy when he talked about the peace process, especially the future of Jerusalem. "The victim here is justice, as well as human rights," he said. "What Netanyahu is doing is not pleasing to any of our prophets--and those who help are partners in that oppression. It is a great wrong to help any party which is unjust and God will have a punishment for those people."

"It is useful for us here to help convince people that the Christians in America do not always agree with their government," Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan Zakka said with a smile when told that Browning joined other church leaders in signing an ad in U.S. newspapers

that called for a "shared" Jerusalem.

Edmond and Patti Browning, who first visited the Middle East in 1963, returned from the trip with "a renewed commitment to the people and the churches of the Middle East--and a resolve to work for peace," according to the statement.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

97-1729

Episcopal seminaries attend to their students' spirits

by Anne McConney

(ENS) Episcopal seminaries, forced to reconsider their purposes in the face of dwindling resources and a shrinking pool of potential students, confront increasingly the need to serve both head and soul.

Is a seminary simply a place to turn out leaders primed with the latest knowledge in theological studies and biblical interpretation? Is it a training ground for conducting elegant Anglican liturgies or for preaching memorable sermons?

Or is it all these, and more--a place for nurturing the spiritual lives of those from whom others will soon seek guidance?

While the 11 Episcopal seminaries vary in their approaches, each is seeking to balance the rich traditions of Christian thought and spiritual experience as a way to enrich the spiritual lives of its students.

Forming Christian community

Interviews with seminary deans point to a common concern with the formation of Christian community.

"There's a burden on the seminaries to do this," said Dean William Rankin of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. "We have to work in community. If we are only looking for our own consummation, then it's bogus. Being fully human is learned in community. We have to be oriented to each other as well as to the divine."

Several deans compared seminary life to that of a "small but very intense" parish.

"We experience the full range of life here," said Dean Gary Kriss of Nashotah House in Wisconsin. "Nashotah is like a parish in that it involves the whole community--students, faculty, staff and all their families. We have all the stresses and all the good events. It's like a little village."

The Rev. Arthur Holder, academic dean and professor of Christian spirituality at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) in Berkeley, California, agrees--and went on to point out that "the nature of seminary students is changing." The time is over when a seminary was filled with 20-year-old males, he said. "Now we're no longer homogeneous and no longer residential--over half of our students live off campus. Our approach to community has to recognize that."

One result, he said, has been a "realization that a seminary is more like a parish than a monastic community." CDSP has revamped its worship schedule accordingly, placing its major Eucharist in the middle of the day. "Like a parish, we come together from many places and many interests to worship as a community."

Community out of diversity

Several seminaries, including Bexley Hall, Berkeley Divinity School at Yale and CDSP, are affiliated with multi-denominational institutions, and for them the concept of community includes not only the Anglican tradition but many others.

At Bexley Hall in Rochester, New York, for example, a weekly prayer group is open to both Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians. "And it's really popular," said acting Dean John Kevern. "It's extremely well attended and growing."

All agreed that spirituality and community life must be built on the firm ground of private prayer and corporate worship. For Bishop Craig Anderson, dean and president of General Seminary in New York, there are four "pillars" of the spiritual life. "The first is dedication to a life of meditation and prayer in which the student is surrounded by--immersed in--the spiritual life of the community. The second is education in tradition while living that tradition."

A third "is more subtle," he said. "Many students come to seminary with preconceived ideas. We try to help them be open to change, open to the leading of God, open to new ideas. And, of course, the last is transformation. We like to think they take that with them."

At Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, students and faculty are both asked to commit themselves to a covenant that, according to Dean Peter Moore, includes "private daily devotions, chapel attendance, New Testament sexual standards and the completion of scholarly assignments."

Some seminaries require attendance at daily services, while others, where students may not be on campus every day, do not. At most seminaries students are also expected to worship at a church of their choice each Sunday.

"Contrary to popular belief," said Kriss, "Nashotah House students are not monochromatic. We expect them to find a parish that fits their style."

Variety in worship

"At Seabury-Western, we do all forms of worship in the course of a year--Rite 1,

Rite 2 and alternative services in all their variations," said the Rev. Meredith Potter, director of academic affairs at the seminary in Evanston, Illinois. "The idea is that, wherever our students may go, they'll be able to say, 'I worshiped in this mode before' and be comfortable with it."

Since part of a Seabury-Western seminarian's experience must include learning to lead worship, each student there is assigned to a "worship team" to plan services and serve in every capacity except celebrant. Potter recalls her first celebration at the seminary and how carefully it was planned.

"The worship team leader called on me to discuss the service and later we met with the full team. Before the service there was a walk-through and the leader explained the intentionality of the service and the mood we were trying to set. And afterward we had a feedback session with a group--faculty, students, spouses--who had attended the service."

Such careful planning, such elegant balancing of all phases of the spiritual life, is not easy, yet the church's seminaries consider it to be their mandate. "In the society we live in today," said Bexley Hall's Kevern, "we're bedeviled by a disjunction between academic theology and prayer."

Such disjunction, he believes, can hamper both study and spirituality. "The two have to be integrated. Prayer gives rise to theology and theology gives rise to prayer. When you have both, each one gets progressively deepened," he said. "After all, that's what theology is--the prayer of the Christian community over 2,000 years as it reflects on itself."

Focus on spiritual formation

Noting that it is possible to learn a great deal of academic theory about spirituality and still have little personal understanding of it, Anderson stressed that General Seminary emphasizes "formation and not education." At General, "we conform life to a pattern," he said. "We live a life of prayer; the whole day is framed by prayer."

Amid the fragmentation and brittle spiritual searching of modern life, it is not surprising that the seminaries see themselves as safe harbors of spirituality. But it was not always so.

Only in the past decade has theological education, in all denominations, begun to move from standardized courses in theological history and biblical interpretation to an examination of the spiritual realities behind them.

"When I was in seminary," recalled Dean Philip Turner of Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, "some of us were interested in learning about prayer, and we were told, 'Go to chapel.' Later I met missionaries from the Church of England, where they do much more spiritual formation, and I began to think."

His thoughts began to bear fruit with the formation of the Annand Center for Spiritual Growth at Berkeley, named to honor Dean James Annand, Turner's predecessor, who had also dreamed of a program that would provide spiritual direction, study and mentoring, as well as workshops, forums and other special events, to the Berkeley-Yale community.

Finding spiritual directors

Though the Annand Program is in many ways breaking new ground, it is far from alone in the blossoming renewal of interest in spirituality. Nearly all seminaries encourage their students to have spiritual directors. ("It's not required, but it's the norm," said General's Anderson.)

Some, such as Nashotah House, Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria and the School of Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, bring in experienced spiritual advisers at their own expense. At some seminaries, such as Trinity, faculty members volunteer their time as spiritual directors, while others, believing such an arrangement may inhibit necessary openness, maintain rosters of qualified directors.

All will help students find a director "if they ask," said Kevern. "We don't push them. We've found the students are very pro-active about finding a director for themselves."

Spirituality is also finding its way into the formal academic curriculum.

"Academics and prayer go together," said Dean Durstan McDonald of the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas.

"I'm increasingly convinced we need a curricular base," said Turner. Berkeley students planning on ordination, he said, are required to complete three classes in spirituality—one on the basic ethos of the church, another focused on discernment of calling and a third in study of the spiritual classics of the Western tradition. Other seminaries have similar requirements.

At Virginia, Bishop Mark Dyer serves as both director of spiritual formation and as professor of systematic theology. "I felt it was important to do both," he said. "Spirituality has to be considered on the same high level as any other academic discipline. Spiritual formation is essential to doing theology at the highest level."

Spirituality as grounding

Despite the growing emphasis on spirituality, seminaries and students do not inhabit some rarified theological stratosphere; all are much aware of the dissensions and pressures with which they must deal.

"Spirituality is the thing that will sustain us," said Dean Guy Lytle at Sewanee. "It's important that everyone keep a strong spiritual life while we have what are often very divisive discussions," he said. "What I want to see for Sewanee is to have everybody--liberals, conservatives, evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics--have honest, passionate debates and then all go into Eucharist together."

It is this realization that spirituality is intense and prophetic and quarried from the rough stone of ordinary life that may be the greatest strength of the seminaries in our time.

"We're so individualistic today we tend to think only of private prayer," said McDonald. "But spirituality is your whole life. Part of spiritual formation is juggling family and schedules and wrestling with time. The way you do academic work is spiritual."

"We're working toward an awareness that all we do is spiritual," said Dyer.

"Spirituality isn't an adjunct at Virginia--it's everything we do."

--The Rev. Anne McConney of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, is a columnist for *Episcopal Life* and former editor of the *Rio Grande Episcopalian*.

97-1730

Statement by Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning of the Episcopal Church, April 3, 1997

The Urgent Struggle for an Enduring Peace

The Middle East, the Holy Land, the home of our faith and still home to more than 10 million Christians, is poised on the brink of an uncertain future. Its people are searching for a future that could be based either upon the hope for justice and loving coexistence or one that will bow to past antagonisms and an endless cycle of violence and discord.

After my visit to the region--to attend a meeting of Anglican Primates in Jerusalem and to travel to Gaza and the West Bank, Cyprus, Lebanon and Syria--I am more convinced than ever that it is critical for the international community to support those who are working for a peaceful future.

Perhaps no two cities capture more clearly both the hopes and the fears of the region than the Holy City of Jerusalem and the war-torn but miraculously tenacious city of Beirut. During our time in Jerusalem we learned of the horrendous murder of Israeli children at the "Island of Peace" between Israel and Jordan. We also witnessed the beginning of the highly controversial construction of the new settlement in East Jerusalem, accompanied by predictions that the fateful decision by the Israeli government might derail the fragile peace process. And in Jerusalem itself, a touchstone of faith for three religions, we experienced a increasing level of distrust.

In Beirut we saw a city that has emerged from 16 years of civil war and external invasions with a seemingly indomitable will to recreate a society in which Christians and Muslims live and work together. Out of the ashes of war is rising a "new," reconstructed Beirut that also clings to the "old" in its attempts to recapture Lebanon's unique vocation of pluralism and

coexistence in a region too often torn by national and sectarian rivalries. We were moved and encouraged by the role of the Middle East Council of Churches in this process of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

From our visits with religious and political leaders several common themes emerged:

1. Throughout the region people are deeply worried about the future of the peace process and disappointed by the role of the United States as a sponsor of that process. The repeated vetoes by the U.S. of United Nations Security Council resolutions produced both anger and incredulity among Muslims and Christians alike. They questioned the basic fairness of a process in which one side expressed almost uncritical support of only one partner in the process.
2. Many expressed concern about the emigration of Christians, a growing phenomenon throughout the region stemming from a variety of reasons--worries about religious extremism, a shaky economic climate, the constant threat of war.
3. We walked through dusty refugee camps of Gaza and southern Lebanon where, in some cases, several generations of Palestinians stubbornly cling to the hope that the international community will remember their plight as they try to survive with diminishing support from the United Nations.
4. The Lebanese expressed frustration with the continued ban on travel to that country by American citizens, arguing that the ban is no longer justified by the security situation and may even be punitive toward Lebanon as a result of its role in the peace process. The ban is particularly galling to U.S. churches that have had a long and honorable tradition of work there.
5. From all of our conversations we sense incomprehension and deep hurt over the caricatures of the people of the Middle East in much of American society. We were constantly urged to ask members of our churches to visit and experience not only the problems but the strength of diverse cultures seeking new ways to live together in peace.

We returned from our trip with a renewed commitment to the people and the churches of the Middle East--and a resolve to work for peace. I pledge my own personal efforts to communicate what we learned to church and government leaders and to work for a just and loving policy toward the peoples of a land that is still holy.

97-1731

News teams prepare to cover General Convention

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) The news of the 72nd General Convention in Philadelphia this summer will be covered by an experienced cadre of volunteer reporters and editors working to produce the *Convention Daily* newspaper and the daily releases for Episcopal News Service (ENS).

Michael Barwell, director of communications for the Diocese of Southern Ohio, will once again oversee the ENS team of volunteers as editor, assisted by Diane Walker of Shaw Island, Washington, a free-lance writer and former communications director for the Diocese of Olympia.

The four reporters who will follow the daily twists and turns of legislation in the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops for ENS include two veterans of former conventions, the Rev. Jan Nunley, rector of St. Peter's and St. Andrew's Church in Providence, Rhode Island, and David Skidmore, director of communication for the Diocese of Chicago. Joining them are the Rev. Walt Gordon, communications officer for the Diocese of Minnesota; and Genie Carr, a free-lance writer living in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

In addition, Art Stewart of Reputation Management will assist James Solheim, director of the Episcopal Church's office of news and information, and James Thrall, deputy director, with media relations.

Convention Daily staff named

The *Convention Daily* team of volunteers will produce nine issues of *The Daily*, which is distributed at the convention center and by first-class mail to subscribers.

Reporters for *The Daily* will include veteran Mary Lee Simpson, editor of the *Southwestern Episcopalian*; Herb Gunn, editor of *The Record*, newspaper of the Diocese of Michigan; and Sharon Sheridan Hausman, a free-lance writer for *Episcopal Life* who lives in Flanders, New Jersey. Dick Snyder of Carson City, Nevada, a free-lance photographer for *Episcopal Life*, will serve as chief photographer, assisted by a local photographic team.

Jerry Fargo, art director for *Episcopal Life*, the national newspaper of the Episcopal Church, will lay out *The Daily*. Jerry Hames, editor of *Episcopal Life*, will oversee *The Daily* team as well as the regular staff of *Episcopal Life*--News Editor Ed Stannard and Features Editor Nan Cobbey--who will be preparing *Episcopal Life*'s convention coverage.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

97-1732

Press applications for 1997 General Convention

(ENS) Members of the press interested in covering the 72nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, July 16-25, are invited to apply for press credentials. An application form is included with this packet (see below).

Because this convention is expected to generate high media interest, we regret that it will not be possible to grant all requests. Also, we will be able to issue only one press pass to each news organization. Different members of the same news organization, however, may trade off the single pass.

Additional forms for registering for the convention and for housing will be sent with notice of approval.

For additional information, please contact the Office of News and Information at 800-334-7626, Ext. 5384, or 212-922-5384.

Application for Press Accreditation
72nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church
July 16-July 25, 1997
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name: _____

Publication/Station: *Journal of the American Statistical Association*

Title:

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **FAX:** _____

E-mail: [\[REDACTED\]](mailto:)

E-mail:

Print media

Circulation: *show no significant tendency to increase or decrease*

Type: news, opinion, advocacy, other

Electronic media

Audience: size and geographic spread

Type: radio, broadcast TV, cable TV, indep. film crew, indep. video crew, other

I will make my own arrangements for accommodations.

I need information on accommodations for the General Convention.

Please fax or mail this form to: Office of News and Information, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10017. FAX: 212-557-5827. Our e-mail address is ens@ecunet.org.



reviews and resources

97-1733

Guide to retreat center guest houses available from CTS Publishing

(ENS) The newest edition of the *U.S. and Worldwide Guide to Retreat Center Guest Houses* is now available, listing more than 850 guest houses in the U.S., Canada, Europe, New Zealand and Australia. Guest centers are located in all 50 states. The retreat centers are abbeys, priories, missions, and sanctuaries that offer overnight accommodations and three meals daily for \$35 to \$45 per person per day. The guide lists addresses, telephone numbers, names of contact persons, prices, and on-site facilities, and describes nearby scenic and cultural attractions. A set of maps pinpoints the location of each guest center. Copies of the guide may be obtained for \$15.95 from CTS Publications, P.O. Box 8355, Newport Beach, CA 92660 (Add \$2.00 if first class postage is desired).

Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars on World Wide Web

(ENS) The Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars (AABS), an international organization of biblical scholars who are affiliated with the churches of the Anglican Communion, recently announced its own web page at <http://members.aol.com/AngABS/>. The web site contains information on the organization, its membership, and its meetings and projects. An online membership application is also available. The purpose of the AABS is to support biblical scholarship at all levels of the Anglican Communion. AABS is dedicated to fostering greater involvement of biblical scholars in the life of Anglican Churches, and to promoting the development of resources for biblical studies in Anglican theological education.

PBFund offers Physician's Desk Reference to overseas health programs

(ENS) The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief (PBFWR) recently purchased approximately 30 copies of the Physician's Desk Reference General Directory and 10 computer versions of the reference book through Interchurch Medical Assistance, a non-profit group that helps church groups locate pharmaceutical and medical equipment for donation. Some of these resources have been distributed to missionaries working in health programs outside the United States such as South Africa and Uganda, but there are still some copies available. Anyone who knows of a clinic outside the United States that could use this resource should send a letter describing the health

program, including the name of the person who is in charge and how long the program has been operating, to Angela Cappiello, director of grants, Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, 815 2nd Avenue, NY, NY 10017.

Communications access to Church Center now available for deaf

(ENS) The national offices of the Episcopal Church can now be contacted by TTY, a communication device used by the deaf community. People equipped with a TTY can dial (212) 922-5289 to transmit messages for any office at the Episcopal Church Center in New York.

Genesis series with Bill Moyers to be rebroadcast

(ENS) "Genesis: A Living Conversation" will be rebroadcast in its entirety beginning Sunday, April 27, at 7 p.m. (ET) and continuing every Sunday evening through June. "My hope for the series is that it will encourage others . . . to read and talk about the stories of Genesis for the experience itself, and as a way of opening one's mind to what we can learn from each other," Moyers said. "This matters. The more each of us knows and understands, the better our chances for living purposeful lives, creating strong families, building solid communities and forging a more tolerant and vibrant democracy." To help people with the formation of their own groups, Doubleday has published "Talking About Genesis: A Resource Guide," a 175-page paperback that provides insights, ideas and suggestions for discussion. Internet users can visit the Genesis Website at <http://www.pbs.org> or <http://www.wnet.org>.

Blue Book available from Episcopal Parish Services

(ENS) The Blue Book of the 72nd General Convention, which is actually maroon, can be ordered from Episcopal Parish Services for \$18 plus shipping and handling. Call 800-903-5544 to order. Titled "Report to the 72nd General Convention, Otherwise Known as The Blue Book," the 550-page volume includes reports and resolutions from the committees, commissions, boards and agencies of the General Convention. Individual reports also have been posted at the General Convention web page at : www.ecusa.anglican.org/governance/general-convention/

Photographs available in this issue of ENS:

1. Anglican Communion primates walk Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem (97-1722)*
2. Browning joins Anglican Communion primates for Jerusalem meeting (97-1722)*
3. Anglican Communion primates visit Gaza refugee camp (97-1722)*

4. Anglican Communion primates dedicate refurbished church in Gaza (97-1722)*
5. Arafat hosts luncheon for Anglican Communion primates in Gaza (97-1722)*
6. Anglican Communion primates meet in Jerusalem to discuss common concerns (97-1722)*
7. Carey and Browning visit Prime Minister Netanyahu (97-1722).*
8. Relations between Christians and Muslims crucial for Mideast peace (97-1728)*
9. Presiding bishop meets Sudanese Anglican students in Beirut (97-1728)*
10. Presiding bishop greets Fellowship of Middle East Evangelicals in Cyprus (97-1728)*

* This photo is available in color.

Tentative mailing dates for future ENS releases are April 17 and May 8.

The Episcopal News Service is available electronically. QUEST users can join the "Episcopal News Service" meeting to receive full versions of all stories or join "ENS Digest" to receive the digest versions of our news stories. Web users can visit the official Episcopal Church website at www.ecusa.anglican.org.